

## Sexual Health in Relationships

Part of making sure that you are in a safe and healthy relationship includes a positive and respectful approach to sexuality.

## Talking About Sexual History

It is important to talk to your partner about their sexual history. Talking with your partner for the first time can make you nervous. Be **open and honest** about your own history. Don't be judgmental. Practicing before hand can help. Choose the right time to talk, **do not wait until you and your partner are in a sexual situation**. It is also a good time to talk about getting tested and staying protected.

## Condom Use

If you and your partner decide to have sex, you should be able to talk openly about the use of condoms. Condoms, if used correctly and used every time you have sex, are an effective way of reducing the risk of sexually transmitted diseases/infections (STDs/STIs), HIV and unwanted pregnancy.



Image courtesy of 'nenetus' at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

## Here are some tips to help you and your partner talk about using condoms:

**If your partner says:** I don't like using condoms.

**You can say:** Tell me why not. (have a conversation about why they are important)

**If your partner says:** It doesn't feel good with a condom.

**You can say:** It would feel better to know we are being safe and making healthy decisions.

**If your partner says:** But I love you.

**You can say:** Then help me be safe and healthy.

**If your partner says:** I am not using a condom, no matter what.

**You can say:** I will not have sex without a condom, no matter what.

**If your partner says:** I guess you don't really love me.

**You can say:** I am not going to prove my love by having unprotected sex. Do you really love me? Do you want to protect me?

Rejection is not the end of the world. In a healthy relationship your partner should respect you and want to protect your well-being. You should not feel pressured to have sex or have sex without protection, if that is what you request.

Also, remember each person should be respectful when speaking. If you are already in an unhealthy relationship make sure to keep your personal safety in mind.

If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy relationship, there is help. Here are some resources to learn more.

**CDC - Violence Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention)  
See 'Dating Matters'

**love is respect.org**  
[www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)  
24/7 help @ 1.866.331.9474  
Text and chat services available.

**Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network**  
[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)  
1.800.656.HOPE (4673)

**National Domestic Violence Hotline**  
[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)  
24/7 help @ 1.800.799.SAFE (7233)

**Casa De Esperanza**  
[www.casadeesperanza.org](http://www.casadeesperanza.org)  
Linea de crisis 24-horas/24-hour crisis line  
1.651.772.1611

**Men Can Stop Rape**  
Creating Cultures Free From Violence  
[www.mencanstoprape.org](http://www.mencanstoprape.org)

**Male Survivor**  
[www.malesurvivor.org](http://www.malesurvivor.org)



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services  
Section for Disease Prevention  
P.O. Box 570  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570  
[www.health.mo.gov](http://www.health.mo.gov)

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER  
Services provided on a non-discriminatory basis.

#529 9/2015

# Healthy Relationships & SEXUAL HEALTH



# Positive Characteristics

## What is a relationship?

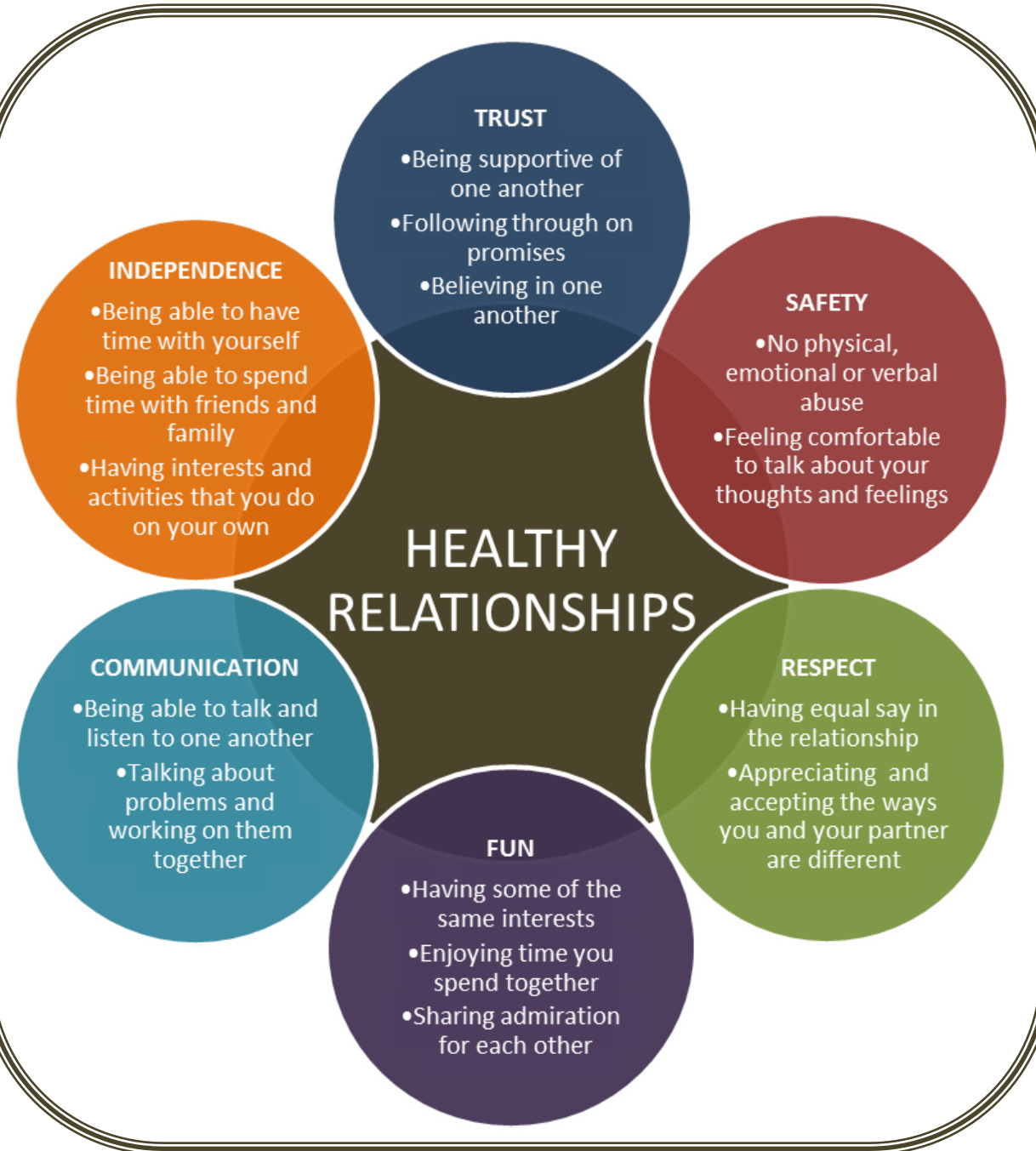
Relationships are the way two or more people are connected. In life we have many different relationships, such as those with family members, friends, and romantic partners.

## What is a healthy relationship?

A healthy relationship is fun, makes you feel good about yourself and your partner. Some things that make up a healthy relationship are when both people are trusting, honest, respectful, and they communicate. A healthy relationship should be **free from** any physical **harm**, emotional abuse, verbal abuse or sexual violence.

Some positive characteristics of a healthy relationship are:

**TRUST, SAFETY, RESPECT, COMMUNICATION, INDEPENDENCE and FUN**



Whether the relationship is with a family member, friend or romantic partner, it is important to recognize the signs of an unhealthy relationship. A relationship can become unhealthy when it involves disrespect, abuse or controlling behavior.

Look at the 'Positive Characteristics' of a healthy relationship and compare. If the behaviors in your relationship are opposite of those listed then it could mean the relationship is unhealthy.

## Signs of an unhealthy relationship might include...

One or both individuals may:

- Push the other to do things they do not want to, like have sex or do drugs
- Not want the other to have friends
- Act jealous, possessive or lacking in trust
- Blame the other for their bad behavior
- Not be willing to communicate
- Make the other feel bad about themselves
- Be physically, emotionally, verbally, or sexually abusive (even things that might seem like no big deal, are a big deal. For example: pushing, name calling or anything that you have asked them not to do.)

Sometimes you may want to make excuses for those who are mistreating you because you love them. Remember that you deserve a happy and healthy relationship, and that you have the power to make sure that your relationship is healthy.